What is claimed:

1   1.   A method for calculating the amount of marking material

2   required to print a print job, comprising the steps of:

3   transmitting a print job to a server;

4   coping the print job; and

5   as a first task:

6   processing the print job including at least selecting an image-forming

7   device for the print job; and

8   transmitting the print job to the selected image-forming device; and

9   as a second, separate task utilizing the copy of the print job, calculating the

10   amount of marking material required to print the print job.

1   2.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the print job is converted to a

2   universal file format file prior to being transmitted to the server.

1   3.   The method of Claim 2 wherein the step of calculating the

2   amount of marking material required to print the print job includes the steps of:

3   converting the copy of the universal file format file to raster data;

4   counting the number of image elements contained in the print job; and

5   calculating the amount of marking material required to print the print job

6   using a known amount of marking material for printing an individual image element.

1   4.   The method of Claim 2 wherein the universal file format

2   comprises Portable Document Format.

1   5.   The method of Claim 2 wherein the step of processing the print

2   job includes converting the universal file format file to a page description language

3   (PDL) file.

1   6.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of calculating the

2   amount of marking material required to print the print job includes the steps of:

3   converting the copy of the print job to raster data;

4   counting the number of image elements contained in the print job; and

5   calculating the amount of marking material required to print the print

6   job using a known amount of marking material for printing an individual image

7   element.

1   7.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the first and second tasks are

2   performed by the server in parallel.

1   8.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the second task is performed

2   by the server in the server background.

1   9.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the marking material comprises

2   toner for use in a laser printer.

1   10.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the marking material comprises

2   ink for use in an ink jet printer.

1   11.   In a computer network including a host computer, a print server

2   and at least one image-forming device wherein a marking material is used for

3   creating images on a print media, a method for calculating the amount of marking

4   material required to print a print job submitted by a user, comprising the steps of:

5   converting a print job to a universal file format file;

6   transmitting a the universal file format file to a print server;

7   coping the universal file format file; and

8   as a first task:

9   converting the universal file format file to a page description language

10   (PDL) file;

11   processing the print job PDL file including at least selecting an image-

12   forming device for the print job; and

13   transmitting the print job to the selected image-forming device; and

14   as a second, separate task utilizing the copy of the universal file format file:

15   converting the universal file format file to raster data;

16   counting the number of image elements contained in the print job; and

17   calculating the amount of marking material required to print the print

18   job using a predetermined amount of marking material for printing an

19   individual image element.

1   12.   The method of Claim 11 wherein the first and second tasks are

2   performed by the server in parallel.

1   13.   The method of Claim 11 wherein the second task is performed

2   by the server in the server background.

1   14.   The method of Claim 11 wherein the marking material

2   comprises toner for use in a laser printer.

1   15.   The method of Claim 11 wherein the marking material

2   comprises ink for use in an ink jet printer.

1   16.   In a computer network, a print server comprising:

2   copying means for copying a received print job;

3   a calculation module adapted to calculate, using the copied print job,

4   the amount of marking material required to print the print job; and

5   processing circuitry for processing the print job and transmitting the

6   processed print job to a desired imaging device.

1   17.   The print server of Claim 16 wherein the received print job

2   comprises print data file having a universal file format.

1   18.   The print server of Claim 17 further comprising a file conversion

2   module for converting universal file format print data file to a page description

3   language file associated with the desired imaging device.

1   19.   The print server of Claim 16 wherein the marking material
2   comprises toner for use in a laser printer.

1   20.   The print server of Claim 16 wherein the marking material
2   comprises ink for use in an ink jet printer.

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